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READING THE FATAL LETTER.

"I QUITE FORGOT."

(FOR THE YOUNG.)

CHAPTER II.

We must now pass over the remaining uneventful school-days of Mary and Adelaide Murray, and No. 191, 1855.

introduce them again to our readers as grown-up, "finished" young ladies. We have yet other circumstances in their life to narrate, which will teach, if our own daily experience should fail to do so, that a bad habit once allowed to take

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root in our heart, grows there till it becomes a part of our nature, or a thorn in our sides for ever.

Mrs. Murray was the widow of a clergyman, who died when Mary was fourteen years old. His children were not left in poverty, however, as curates' children, alas! too often are; for a rich uncle on their mother's side had a short time previously left them six thousand pounds, the interest of which was to be added to their mother's income during her life, and at her death, the principal was to be divided between her daughters. Thus these two girls were, in some sort, heiresses, and as such obtained a double interest in the eyes of the world. We say a double interest, because one at least had attractions enough to win for herself alone general admiration, and that was Adelaide. She was a graceful, lovely girl, amiable, too, and well-disposed; but, at the time our narrative again adverts to her, thoughtless and giddy as ever. Many a trouble did she bring upon her sister and mother by that sad habit of forgetfulness; indeed, we are sorry to say that, when the restraints of school were removed, the evil seemed to grow upon her.

Mrs. Murray was a great invalid, to whom domestic cares were a burden; therefore, when the girls left school, it was arranged they should each keep house a month by turns, to relieve their mother of the charge.

"Please, Miss Mary," said the cook, when this plan had been in vogue a few months, don't you, now, go and give the keys to Miss Adelaide, but keep them yourself—do, pray! I dread Miss Adelaide in the kitchen more than the cat in the larder, for there's no catching her. She's here one minute and gone the next, and orders puddings and then forgets to give out currants and sugar, till I'm driven to my wits' end. Now do you keep the keys—there's a good lady."

And truly cook made no false charges; it was only a marvel she did not give warning whenever Adelaide's month came round. This thoughtlessness of Adelaide's had long no more serious effect than the souring of cook's temper, (a very unfortunate thing for the kitchen-maid, however, who had to put up with her crossness,) and the discomfort of her mother and of every social meal; but on one occasion it brought great distress on another, and caused Adelaide bitter sorrow.

One day Adelaide took her German books into the arbour, which stood a little back from the drive to their house, and there began to study attentively; for she and her sister were not so foolish as to give up all learning when they left school. It was Mary's opinion, that if knowledge was so necessary and costly to acquire, it was no less necessary and precious to keep; and, stimulated by her sister's steady example, Adelaide often spent hours in reading or drawing, which, if left to herself, she would have wasted in frivolity. Adelaide had read for perhaps half an hour, when the sound of voices neared the arbour, and, looking up, she saw the white bonnet and feather of her old school friend Frances Milnes, the daughter of the squire of Adwick. Adelaide hastily closed her books, but the sound caught the ear of Frances, who at once turned to join her in the arbour.

"Ah!" exclaimed Frances, when the first greeting was over, and she had introduced her cousin,

Mr. Lawrence, "taxing those poor intellects again, Adelaide! It is a shame to try your constitution as you do with such close study. What do you think, Frank?" she said, addressing her cousin; "this young lady confesses that she reads two and sometimes three hours a day. Why, Adelaide, you could not do more if you were actually going to be a governess, or at most one of those unhappy girls whose parents are not rich enough to keep a governess, and so compel their daughters to superintend the shooting of the younger twigs."

"We none of us know what we may come to," said Adelaide gaily, gathering the books together, with an engaging blush of embarrassment.

"Some people know very well, I should think," added Frances, with a pointed expression which made Adelaide feel uncomfortable in the presence of a stranger.

She led the way from the arbour, and after sauntering for some time in the garden, where Mr. Lawrence—evidently one of a numerous class of gentlemen who seem to think that the only way to be agreeable to young ladies is to speak frivolously to them and to flatter their vanity—on being asked by Adelaide which was his favourite rose, was so complimentary as to say, with a most admiring glance, that he preferred the roses nature painted in the arbour to all. They went into the house. At the door, the gardener's boy spoke to Adelaide, who turned into the greenhouse with him. He wanted some flower-pots which she bid him go and buy, and gave him—but hurriedly, for the bait of flattery had taken—a shilling for the purpose.

The next day Adelaide missed her purse, and in breathless consternation ran to her sister to inquire if she had seen it. "I cannot find it anywhere, Mary," she exclaimed; "and only think, it had a ten pound note in it, which I quite forgot to put in my desk. Oh! what shall I do?"

The purse was searched for high and low throughout the house, but all to no purpose. Suddenly, the recollection where she had last had it flashed upon Adelaide; it was in or near the greenhouse. She rushed thither, and quite frightened the boy, who was quietly watering the plants, by asking, in a tone of most unwarranted suspicion, prompted by her own anxiety, whether he had not seen her purse, for she was sure she left it there. No, he had not; and the poor boy quite trembled as he noticed his young mistress' eagerness and terror at her loss. Adelaide from that moment was convinced he had stolen it; and on her positive assurance that at the entrance of the greenhouse she had left her purse, her mother felt that facts were really against the boy, and dreading a dishonest servant near her, she dismissed him from her service. The boy was almost heartbroken, but he met with little pity; his asseverations of innocence only strengthened the other servants in the belief of his guilt, and he went back to his bedridden widowed mother without a character, except that odious one of a thief, which would effectually prevent his getting respectable employment again.

Months passed, winter came, and still Adelaide's loss was not repaired; till one day the gardener

went into the arbour to put the oak table under cover for the season, when, under its thick, gnarled legs, he picked up a mouldering bead purse. He took it at once to his mistress; and when Adelaide saw it, and heard where it had been found, she grew quite pale with astonishment and grief. "Poor boy!" she cried, "how rash, how cruel I was! I remember it all distinctly now. I kept my purse in my hand after I gave him the shilling, that day Frances and Mr. Lawrence called, and as I walked up the drive with them, and we stopped chattering in the arbour a good while, I suppose I dropped it there."

Adelaide's first care, when she found the ten pound note was safe, though completely mildewed, was to seek the boy and acknowledge her injustice towards him; but alas! how could she ever make amends for the grief she had caused his old mother, whose end had been hastened by the dreadful suspicion that her son was a thief. The boy would not return to Mrs. Murray's service, as he was begged to do; but Adelaide got him a good place with Mr. Milnes at the hall, and resolved to take an interest in his welfare. So far this was well.

Some time after the occurrence of the above events, there was considerable excitement in the town of Newton and its environs, on account of the annual ball, which was to take place on the fifteenth of January. Cards of announcement were sent to Mrs. Milnes of Adwick-hall, and to Mrs. Murray of the Lodge, in the same village; and it was fully expected by the country people round, that on this occasion the young ladies of those families would be introduced. Adelaide's heart beat high with delight at the prospect of going to a ball; but immediately came the thought how it could possibly be managed. Her mother could not go, and Mary would never agree to her being left by both of them at once. Her hopes were sinking fast, when a note from Mrs. Milnes cheered her drooping spirits again. It contained an offer, or rather an entreaty from that lady, that she might be allowed to take one or both of the Miss Murrays with her party to the ball; and Mrs. Murray, wishing that Adelaide should not be disappointed in a pleasure on which she had so entirely set her heart, closed at once with the obliging proposal. Adelaide was intoxicated with the prospect, as many have been before her. Ah! (delighted as we are to promote the happiness of the young,) would that in passing we might whisper a caution against this seductive amusement, whose pleasure is always transient and destructive to habits of serious reflection. But to proceed with our story.

A few days after, Mr. Milnes' carriage drew up at the Lodge, and Adelaide, who was at the drawing-room window, saw that it was occupied by Mrs. and Miss Milnes and Mr. Lawrence. Only Mrs. Milnes got out, and she was at once shown into the drawing-room.

"Ah! sweet Adelaide!" she exclaimed, on entering, "I am glad you are at home; for I have called not only to see you, but also to take you away, if you think you can get them to spare you a few hours. Frances is going to Newton to buy her ball dress, and she is most anxious to have your good taste to aid her in the choice; and," added

Mrs. Milnes in a flattering tone, "perhaps to give you the benefit of hers for yourself."

"Oh!" said Adelaide, smiling, "my dress is arranged, thank you; but I should like to go to Newton all the same. I will ask mamma if I may go." And away she ran, nodding merrily to Frances in the carriage, as she passed the front door. She found her mamma and Mary in the morning room. Mrs. Murray looked pale and anxious, but she smiled as her daughter bent coaxingly over her, and entreated permission to accompany Mrs. Milnes.

"Certainly, my dear," said the too indulgent mother; "and indeed I am very glad to have an opportunity of sending to Newton; for I have something to send to Mr. Ryder—something of great importance, Adelaide; you will be sure to leave it at his office yourself?"

"Oh, yes, mamma dear, I won't forget. Only I shall not have to go in, shall I? for I always dread a lawyer's office: and really, if Mr. Ryder looks as dark and gloomy to-day as he did after his long conference with you yesterday, I don't know whether I dare face him."

"He had good reason to look grave," replied her mother; "for he forebodes evil, which, however, I hope will not fall on us. Look in here as you go down, my dear. I will give you the parcel, which you had better leave at Mr. Ryder's office as you drive into Newton. I am sure Mrs. Milnes will be so good as to go a little out of her way, if you tell her your business is important."

Adelaide had a very pleasant drive to Newton. Mr. Lawrence was, as we have said, a very great flatterer. He was struck by the young girl's beauty, as well as by what he had heard of her pecuniary attractions, and contrived to win her attention by his fluent and interesting conversation, entering into glowing descriptions of the various fashionable entertainments and parties he had visited; so that the enthusiastic Adelaide, ravished with his brilliant pictures, let her thoughts wander on until she quite forgot her mother's parcel, till she was astonished to find the carriage had stopped at the hotel at Newton.

"Oh, Mrs. Milnes!" she exclaimed, with a troubled face, "I quite forgot to ask you to drive round by Mr. Ryder's, that I might leave a parcel from mamma at his office. Will you kindly wait for me here a few minutes, while I walk with it myself?"

"My dear," answered Mrs. Milnes, "I could not think of allowing you to go into those back streets alone. I would accompany you, but Frances is anxious to go at once into the town; so wait till we return, and then we will leave the parcel: it will do just as well."

Adelaide was fain to agree; for Frances hurried her on, longing to be seated at the counter, and turning over the silks and laces at Messrs. Howell and Sons.

"Now what are you going to wear at the ball?" asked Frances, as she and Adelaide followed Mr. Lawrence and Mrs. Milnes up the street; "white lace over white silk, I suppose?"

"No, indeed I am not," replied Adelaide. "I have a beautiful Indian muslin, which mamma says will do admirably, and will save expense."

"Save expense! Pshaw! Adelaide, I am

ashamed of you—and you an heiress! Mr. Lawrence, is not this shocking?" And in spite of the blushing remonstrances of Adelaide, Frances informed her cousin of her friend's economical intentions, and laughingly entreated him to take her to task on the subject.

"Miss Murray will do what is correct, I am sure," said Mr. Lawrence. "She intends illustrating the old adage, I suppose—'Beauty is, when unadorned, adorned the most;' but she must remember that though a lily is fair, its beauty consists in its contrast to its dark green leaves. White muslin alone will freeze us in the middle of January. Miss Murray must warm it with a bright contrasting flower."

Adelaide had not intended to wear flowers; but this allusion of Mr. Lawrence to the freezing effect of white muslin worked upon her; and when Frances Milnes' gay dress was chosen, she lingered longer than was prudent over a box of artificial flowers just come from Paris.

"This wreath was twined for you," said Mr. Lawrence, lifting a beautiful string of camelias from the box, and laying them before Adelaide. "You must not turn away from these."

Adelaide inquired the cost, feeling half-ashamed to do so, she, an heiress, when Frances had not asked the price of a single thing she had bought. It was almost a sovereign, and she hesitated; but Frances seemed annoyed at her not deciding at once; and Mr. Lawrence laid the wreath aside for her with such a courteous bow and smile, that Adelaide was taken as it were by storm, and seemed to be at the mercy of her officious friends, who, now encouraged by Mrs. Milnes, insisted on choosing the rest of her ornaments, till she found she had a bill to pay, amounting to no less than a five pound note.

Adelaide, greatly perplexed, and ashamed to show that she was so before Mr. Lawrence, who continued to pay her the most devoted attention, desired the flowers might be put down to her mother's account, and felt quite guilty in doing so, wishing most earnestly she had had courage to say "no!"

Other shops were visited, and the short winter's day wore on, till the party were obliged to hurry to the hotel, and order the carriage in haste. It was fast getting dark when they started for their drive home, and Adelaide was glad that it was; for she was vexed with herself for her imprudent folly in Howells' shop, and tears actually came to her eyes as she thought how annoyed Mary would be.

The thought of home reminded her of the parcel; most fortunately, for she had forgotten it again, and they were already passing the street in which was Mr. Ryder's office. Mrs. Milnes seemed a little put out at being obliged to go such a long way round on that cold evening; nevertheless, she pulled the check string, and gave orders to stop at Mr. Ryder's, the lawyer.

Adelaide gave the man the parcel, and leant forward to watch him go up the narrow steps with it. He rang—no answer. He knocked—silence was the only reply. He came down to the street again, and looked up at the office windows—all was dark—no one was at home. Adelaide's conscience smote her. Oh that she had remembered

it at first! Did Mrs. Milnes know where Mr. Ryder's private residence was, she asked. No, no one knew. The parcel was returned to her, and the carriage drove on.

Adelaide need not have grieved so, as she related her imprudence in purchasing the flowers to her mother and Mary. Poor girl! she would never wear them; imprudence was a minor fault; but that besetting one of thoughtlessness had that day sealed her fate, and darkened all her prospects in life.

"Did you leave the parcel at Mr. Ryder's?" asked her mother anxiously.

"No, mamma dear. I am very sorry, but I quite forgot it as we drove in. We called as we returned, but the office was closed."

"Oh, Adelaide!" exclaimed Mrs. Murray, in such a tone of alarm and distress that both her daughters trembled with the foreboding that oppressed their mother, "did I not charge you not to forget?"

Two days later, the post brought two letters for Mrs. Murray: one in a strange handwriting, which she opened at once, and with a smile handed to Adelaide, who read it amidst blushes of confusion and tears she could not repress. It was an entreaty from Mr. Lawrence to be allowed to visit Mrs. Murray, and to endeavour to win the affections of her youngest daughter.

But even while Mary and Adelaide were bending together over this letter, and reading it with breathless interest, misfortune, poverty, misery, had fallen on their mother. She leant, almost paralysed, on the table, her fingers convulsively pressed on an open letter; and not the weeping entreaties of both her daughters could gain from her one word of explanation. Mary forcibly took the letter: it was from Mr. Ryder, and she read as follows:—

"Dear Madam—I regret extremely that you did not comply with my advice, and forward your banking book and papers yesterday. I have now the painful task of informing you that my worst suspicions regarding the soundness of the firm have been confirmed. On calling at the bank this morning, to draw a large amount for a friend, I found the company had declared themselves insolvent half an hour previously. Had I had your book and papers yesterday, I could have drawn the 6000*l.* intact. I have now to inform you that a small dividend will be paid to the creditors, for which, with your sanction, I will apply."

Was ever wretchedness and self-reproach equal to that of Adelaide Murray then? We cannot describe it. Well was it for her that she had read and studied as a governess might have done; for only by labouring as a governess could she hope to repair, in some small degree, the loss and misery she had brought on her home.

As for Mr. Lawrence and his visits, they had been offered to Adelaide Murray as the heiress of three thousand pounds; and when he heard that her wealth had made itself wings and flown away, he left a P.P.C. card on the heiress of labour and poverty, and fled also.

And Adelaide, in many a schoolroom, for many a long year, was often heard to say to her thoughtless pupils—"Children, remember, 'I quite forgot' may burn a house down."*

* The moral of our tale may be confirmed by an extract from a writer of no less eminence than Bishop Butler. His

DR. ALEXANDER ADAM.

BY AN OLD PUPIL.

THE name of Dr. Adam is much esteemed in English seminaries, from his being author of the "Roman Antiquities" and other works connected with classical literature; but, as the history of his life, which, especially in its earlier period, exhibits rare perseverance under discouragements, is, we believe, little known to English readers, we venture, having ourselves been trained under the worthy doctor, to present the following sketch of it, hoping that it may stimulate and encourage some student struggling with difficulties, in his path to honourable distinction.

Alexander Adam was born in 1741, on a small farm which his father rented in the parish of Rafford, in Morayshire; he was taught to read by an old mistress, to whose gentle treatment he ascribed his first liking for books, and was then sent to the parish school, where, under the tuition of a kind master, he made rapid progress, though it was interrupted by his being frequently kept at home to tend his father's sheep. Determined, however, to encounter every difficulty rather than abandon his studies, he devoted himself to them indefatigably in his father's house. Before he was sixteen, he had read all Livy in a borrowed copy, and was even able to supply temporarily the place of more than one neighbouring schoolmaster.

About this time his father suffered severely by an imprudent change of his farm, and the zeal of his mother alone saved him from being taken entirely from school and set to field-work. He wished to go to college; but as his parents could not afford him the means, he walked to Aberdeen, a distance of eighty miles, and stood candidate for a small exhibition (called in Scotland a bursary) given by one of the colleges there to young men who distinguished themselves in classical attainments. He was, however, unsuccessful, as the prize was awarded for the best written Latin exercise, and he had not been much accustomed to write. Nothing dispirited, he applied to a relation of his mother, Mr. Watson, a parish minister in Edinburgh, proposing to go to that city to push his way. To this he received the following reply:—"I will, for the sake of your parents, do for you all that lies in my power; only, if you are not willing to undergo any hardships for a season, I should advise you not to seek your fortune any where from home. If you can resolve on this, come immediately, and I doubt not but it may be in my power to put you in a way of getting bread. I expect you will not hesitate because I have spoken of hardships, and the first you must undergo is to travel to this place when the winter is coming on; but this is necessary, as the colleges meet very soon. Make no preparation for your journey, but a little money and some linen; for clothes, take what you have, and come straight to me on your arrival."

This not very encouraging letter did not change

his views. The prospect of enduring the hardships of life could not be very appalling to one who had known so little of its enjoyments; he accordingly left his home, and in a chill season walked to Edinburgh, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. He met there with a kind reception from his friend, who, besides both then and subsequently tendering him much excellent advice for his guidance, got him admission to the lectures of different professors, as well as access to books in the college library. During his first session at the college, his father died, and the small sum he had brought with him was exhausted. Disliking to apply to Mr. Watson, he determined to live on such pittance as he could obtain by private teaching. He accordingly took lodgings in the house of a gardener in the suburbs; and the privations he felt will best appear from his own account of them. "The gardener," says he, "was a very industrious man, who had family worship morning and evening, in which I joined, and said prayers alternately. After breakfast I went to town to attend my classes and my private pupil. For dinner I had three small loaves called *baps*, which I got for a penny farthing. As I was always dressed in my best clothes, I was ashamed to buy these from a baker in the street. I therefore went down to a baker's in the middle of a close, and, putting them in my pocket, I went up some public staircase to eat them, without either beer or water. In this manner I lived at a little more than fourpence a-day, including everything." Next session he added to this fare a halfpenny-worth of broth.

By his friend's recommendation he soon afterwards got the place of domestic tutor in a family, and applied himself to the study of Greek, and to repairing the defects of his early tuition. In 1760, while in his nineteenth year, he obtained, after a comparative trial, the head mastership of George Watson's hospital—one of those charitable foundations with which Edinburgh abounds beyond any city in the empire;* and, having written to his old preceptor at Rafford, informing him of his success, received a reply, from which we extract the following passage, so characteristic of that meritorious but ill-requited class—the parochial teachers of Scotland. "In taking a view of this benevolent dispensation of Providence, I hope you are beforehand with me in making this reflection, that you can never spend your time, talents, and opportunities to better purpose than in promoting the honour and interest of your God and Saviour, and keeping alive within a sense of gratitude, which will incline you to walk worthy of such distinguishing mercies. Prosperity, when quick, may make men too much elated, so as to attribute too much to their own personal performance; but I hope you are of better principles than to think it can continue always, and are determined to show, by the assistance of God, that, instead of puffing you up, it will make you humble, decent, regular in your conduct, and that when your heavenly Father has been pleased to

sentence is worthy of being engraved on the hearts of the young. "It is," he observes, in his "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed," "very much to be remarked that neglect from inconsiderateness, want of attention, not looking about us to see what we have to do, are often attended with consequences altogether as dreadful as any active misbehaviour from the most extravagant passion."

* There are at present fourteen of these in the city and its vicinity, many of which are very wealthy. They are commonly called "hospitals"—a Scotch phrase which, as thus used, has no reference to medicine, but denotes an institution for the support of the aged or infirm, or for the education of youth.

smile on you, you must wholly ascribe it to the merciful and gracious nature of God, and not to any worth of your own."

While in his new situation he was in the habit of rising early, and after devotional exercises he proceeded methodically with the study of theology, Greek, French, and Latin—perusing the whole works of Cicero, noting in writing the different phrases, and inserting in a book translations of the most difficult passages.

In 1763 he was induced, by the prospect of more leisure for study, to quit the hospital, and take charge, as private tutor, of the son of a wealthy citizen of Edinburgh, who afterwards became lord provost. In consequence of this connection, he was, in 1768, after a severe examination, by parties of whom some were rather unfriendly, appointed rector of the High School, the duties of which office he discharged for more than forty years with the greatest zeal, assiduity, and success.* His time was regularly shared between his teaching and that unwearied diligence in private which enabled him to give to the public so many accurate and laborious compilations. He therefore mixed little in society; but his celebrity as a classical teacher kept the number of his pupils constantly increasing up to the year of his death. An enumeration here of the many eminent men who attended his class in the successive years of this long period would be out of place; but we may mention in particular Dugald Stewart, lord chancellor Erskine, the late earl of Lauderdale, professor Hamilton of Aberdeen, admiral sir David Milne, lord president Hope, sir Walter Scott, lords Jeffrey and Cockburn, lord Brougham, Francis Horner, sir Charles Bell, sir Daniel Sandford, Dr. Andrew Combe, several eminent judges now on the Scotch bench, and many of the professors in the universities.

Notwithstanding the name which the school acquired from his character, he met with trouble from quarters from which it was not to be expected. He had introduced into his class the teaching of Greek—which circumstance, and his growing reputation, nettled the professors of Latin and Greek in the college—and the town council, the patrons of the school, besides treating him with personal rudeness, unworthily seconded the efforts of these professors to have his works excluded from being used in it; while even the eminent Drs. Robertson and Blair, though not hostile to him, gave him but feeble support. "It is a pity," says sir Walter Scott, "that a man so learned, so admirably adapted for his station, so useful, so simple, so easily contented, should have had other subjects of mortification. But the magistrates of Edinburgh, not knowing the treasure they possessed in Dr. Adam, encouraged a savage fellow called Nicol, one of the under-masters, in insulting

his person and authority. This man was an excellent classical scholar, and an admirable convivial humourist (which latter quality recommended him to the friendship of Burns), but worthless, drunken, and inhumanly cruel to the boys under his charge. He carried his feud against the rector within an inch of assassination, for he waylaid and knocked him down in the dark. The favour which this worthless rival obtained in the town council led to consequences which for some time clouded poor Adam's happiness." All these grounds of irritation were, however, ultimately overcome, and for a long time before he died his books were freely used in the High School and in most schools in the kingdom. In 1780 the degree of doctor of laws was conferred on him by the college of Edinburgh.

All his works are well known to scholars, but we shall notice two of them only. His "Roman Antiquities" has passed through many editions, and been translated into several continental languages. Though now somewhat superseded by works of a more recent date and more popular form, it is still regarded as a standard book. It might have been more attractively written, and the numerous references to authorities—not in foot notes, but in the text—unpleasantly interrupt the perusal of it; but they show the vast extent of his reading, and there is hardly any matter of the civil or political economies, manners or customs of ancient Rome, which it does not fully explain.

It is on this work that Dr. Adam's reputation mainly rests; but it is deeply to be regretted that he did not live to complete his Latin Dictionary on the extensive plan which he contemplated, as it would have exhibited a treasure of latinity without a parallel. He published, in 1805, a specimen of this much larger work. In the words under the earlier letters of the alphabet, comparatively little of his plan appears; but in the progress of printing, it was more fully developed, and proves not only his profound knowledge of the Latin classics, but a degree of labour nearly inconceivable. His object was to explain every variety of meaning, in which every word is used by any author, and reference is accordingly made to all the passages in the classics where such varieties occur. Thus, to take an instance almost at random, under the word "stare," there are ninety-seven passages referred to, selected from fifteen different authors. In comparison with this, even the meritorious Scripture Concordance of Cruden becomes as nothing in point of labour, and is to be looked on as merely mechanical.*

The merits of Dr. Adam as a teacher were very eminent. In the High School of Edinburgh, the pupils continue for four years with the master under whom their studies begin, and are then transferred to the rector's class, where they usually remain for other two years. Though now quite otherwise, it used often to happen that the under-masters were not enthusiasts in their work, and had not the power of inspiring the boys with a liking for study. The latter, consequently, felt their lessons to be an uninviting toil, to which they

* Of his predecessor, Mr. Matheson, an eminent scholar, who resigned on account of ill health, it is told that, being advised to take violent exercise, he used in winter to amuse himself by turning the large wheel at a cutler's. An Irish student being one day in the shop, said to the outler that he was puzzled by a passage in a Latin author, whose work he had in his pocket, and jeeringly asked the cutler if he could translate Latin. The worthy tradesman requested to be shown the passage, and, affecting surprise, replied, "Why, this is so simple, I dare say even the man at the wheel can translate it for you." Mr. Matheson was called for, and, to the astonishment of Paddy, his difficulty was solved in a twinkling.

* A second edition of the Latin Dictionary appeared a few years after Dr. Adam's death; but as the editor of it thought fit both to abbreviate the previous work and to introduce matter of his own, its worth as an authority is much inferior to that of the first edition, which is now rare and valuable.

went with reluctance, and were glad to get over; but with Dr. Adam it was very different. When he saw any symptom of a willingness to learn, he endeavoured, and almost always succeeded—by a peculiarly winning and encouraging manner which those only who remember him can appreciate—to render the studies of such a youth a source of pleasure to himself. "It was," says sir Walter Scott, "from this respectable man that I first learned the value of knowledge I had formerly considered only as a burdensome task;" and we have heard a pupil of Dr. Adam's say, that such was the zeal for study with which his venerated preceptor had imbued him, that even at the early age of thirteen he had so much delight in the acquisition of his lessons, that he would not have exchanged the duty for any amusement suited to his years, however attractive.

Like other men the doctor's character had its defects, one of which was a species of vanity which frequently made him the hero of his own tale. Sir Walter Scott observes: "Dr. Adam, to whom I owed so much, never failed to remind me of my obligations when I had made some figure in the literary world. He was, indeed, deeply imbued with that fortunate vanity, which alone could induce a man who has arms to pare and burn a muir, to submit to the yet more toilsome task of cultivating youth. Since the time of Buchanan, however, he was almost the only person who had added to the classical character of his country. He was rather disposed to over-rate his power as rector of the school, and consequently to interfere with the duties of the other masters, so as at one time to produce a serious quarrel between him and them; but before his death there was mutual forgetting and forgiving.

"When," continues the same writer, "the French revolution broke out, and parties ran high in approving or condemning it, the doctor incautiously joined the former. This was very natural; for, as all his ideas of existing governments were derived from his experience of the town council of Edinburgh, it must be admitted they scarcely brooked comparison with the free states of Rome and Greece, from which he borrowed his opinions concerning republics. His want of caution in speaking on the political topics of the day lost him the respect of the boys, most of whom were accustomed to hear very different opinions on those matters in the bosom of their families. This, however, passed away with other heats of the period." This statement takes a little colour, we think, from the writer's political leaning. It is certain at least that the doctor used to deplore the danger which republican institutions ran of degenerating into military despotisms, and the expression of his admiration of characters like Cato was seldom unaccompanied by a denouncement of such men as Cæsar, who made their abilities a channel to usurpation and personal power. He ever impressed on his scholars a proper sense of religion, and of duty and obedience to parents.

In the beginning of the course of 1809-10, the unceasing labour, both bodily and mental, of more than forty years, began to tell on Dr. Adam, though his time of life, sixty-eight, was not extreme. His exertions in the school were noticed to be more feeble, his mind was seen somewhat to

wander, and he not unfrequently fell into a slumber on his chair. He continued, however, to attend his class till nearly the last; and only a few moments before he expired, when the dimness of death came over his vision, he was heard to utter the words: "But it grows dark, boys; you may go." He died in December, 1809, and was interred in the cemetery of Buccleuch Chapel of Ease in Edinburgh. His funeral was public, attended by the magistrates of the city in their official robes, by all the pupils of the school, and by almost all his old scholars then in the town. A tablet bearing a Latin inscription, by Dr. James Gregory, the eminent physician, is placed over his grave. He was twice married, and of his second marriage a son and two daughters yet survive.

Some years before his death, he sat, at the request of a few of his former pupils, for a full-length portrait by sir Henry Raeburn, and besides its high merits as a painting, nothing could have been more successful or striking. The likeness is without a fault, and his gentle expression and benevolent smile are hit as if by magic. Strange enough, the right to this valuable piece of art became the subject of a keen lawsuit between the gentlemen at whose expense it was executed, and the town council of Edinburgh. It had been hung in the hall of the High School, and the council maintained, on plausible grounds, that it was gifted to them by its original owners. The Court of Session sustained the plea; but that judgment was altered on appeal, by lord Brougham, then chancellor, who, as a pupil of Dr. Adam, seemed to take much interest in the case. The picture was consequently for a short time removed from the school; but its owners, having established their legal title, with much gracefulness and good feeling restored it to its original position, and it now again adorns the walls of that seminary to the reputation of which the labours of Dr. Adam contributed so highly.

Such was Dr. Adam. A few personal recollections of him, as he rises to the memory of the writer through the medium of nearly half a century, may perhaps appropriately close the article.

He was very encouraging at all times to such boys as showed a wish to learn, and very indulgent to such as evinced that wish, if they happened not to be naturally quick. He was fond, too, of getting his scholars to read the proof sheets of his works when at press, and gave high praise to any one who might happen to discover a typographical error, which, if not corrected, would have made a blunder in Latin gender, number, or case. A detail of his mode of conducting the every-day proceedings of his class would be tedious and not interesting, but his merits as a teacher were not small. "He was," says lord Brougham, "one of the very best teachers I ever heard of, and by far the best I ever knew." "I have always felt," said Mr. Horner, "a most agreeable debt of gratitude to him for the love he gave me in early life for the pursuits which are still my best source of happiness."

The portrait of Dr. Adam, to which allusion has been made, gives an excellent notion of his personal appearance in the school. He was rather above the middle size, quick and active in his gait, and always wore a snuff-brown coat, black waistcoat and breeches, with black silk stockings and large

shoe-buckles. His hat was rather broader in the brim than usual. In winter he always wore the old-fashioned spencer, and walked with his hands placed across his breast, each hand being put into the sleeve of the opposite arm.

Somehow the little boys, in going to the first class of the High School, always got an impression that the doctor was a very austere and severe person. It was the practice for the rector to visit the four junior classes alternately each week, on which occasion he remained in the class so visited for above an hour, the master of that class exchanging duties with him for that short period. The writer recollects well that, when he was in the youngest class, the week of the rector's first visit to it came round. The proper master of it left the room and had gone to Dr. Adam's. For a very short interval the boys, few of them exceeding nine years old, were left by themselves, when, instead of the noise and outbreak of gaiety which is generally seen in such circumstances, there was the most profound silence, and as the footsteps of the rector were heard on the stairs, every little heart seemed to be throbbing with terror. He at length opened the door, but came in with so pleasing a smile on his countenance, and so kind a look on the young class before him, that all fears were in a moment dispelled, and his examination was conducted with so much suavity of manner and indulgence, patting each little boy on the head and chucking him under the chin, that we all sincerely regretted when he left us and our own master returned.

In those days the police of Edinburgh was very defective, the city being left chiefly to the charge of a military body called the Town Guard, which consisted mainly of old invalided soldiers, with a sprinkling of effete chairmen and porters, under the command of some decayed citizen called the captain, all kept up at the expense of the city. The inefficiency of this body gave much encouragement to trickery and fun among the High School boys in particular, and their jokes in this way were sometimes made the subject of complaints to the masters. We used to think that the doctor was often a good deal amused with them, though he checked the exhibition of it. On one occasion, I remember, however, that he was very wroth at having a joke played upon himself. One forenoon a boy had brought and laid on his desk a printed bill of an auction of Latin books. With this the doctor expressed much gratification, as he was always glad to get rare books of the kind when he could pick them up, and he told us that he would always thank us for bringing him any advertisements which any of us might think he would like to see. The hint, among thoughtless boys fond of a prank, was not long of being taken, and when he returned to the school in the afternoon, he found his desk covered with play bills, lottery bills, notices of sales of household furniture, Loch Fine herring, and Dutch butter. He stood for some time with a look of amazement at the pile of paper before him, and on perceiving the joke, he laid about him with the tauze very impartially and indiscriminately. There is little doubt, however, that in the end he pardoned the joke.

He used sometimes, as a punishment for idleness, to keep the boys in the class-room for an

hour or two after the usual hour of dismissal, and was frequently sarcastic enough in what he said in answer to the complaints which were made of it. Thus, on one occasion when he had detained the boys for two hours, one of them, being deputed by the others, went up and addressed him: "Do you know, sir, it is four o'clock?" "Yes, my man, I do," replied the doctor, "and it will be five next." Soon after, however, he let us go.

The annual examination of the school was regularly attended by the magistrates of the city, and his class in particular by several of the judges and many of the bar. With some of those who had been his pupils he used on these occasions to joke familiarly, addressing them by their christian names as he used to do when they were his scholars. He sometimes, too, took that opportunity of having a sly hit at his old friends and patrons, the town council; and we remember an instance of this, where, however, we rather think he had the worst of the joke. The examination was always followed by a dinner, at which the magistrates entertained the masters of the school and a few of the citizens. The lord provost, expressing a wish that the examination might be brought to a close as it was getting late, the doctor replied, with a good-natured smile: "Oh, my lord, not just yet: the dinner won't be cool." His lordship said nothing more at the time; but the doctor, having shortly afterwards alluded to his services as rector for nearly half a century, implying, as some thought, a hint that he should now be allowed to retire on full pay, the provost replied: "We hope, doctor, you are well aware how highly the public value your services, and may you live to continue them for other fifty years to come."

A SUMMER'S RAMBLE THROUGH BELGIUM AND HOLLAND.

PART III.

ON our return to *terra firma* we cast one more look up to this beautiful cathedral, this "tower of Mechlin lace," as Buonaparte loved to call it, and then hastened away to the Bourse or Exchange, longing to see the place where once upon a time the "merchants most *did* congregate," when the whole world's commerce was carried on within the circle of these stone walls. Every one knows how this term "Bourse," now so universally applied to the "Exchanges" of the continent, arose. An ancient Bruges family, in the day when Bruges was what it never will be again—when "Lombard and Venetian merchants, with deep-laden argosies, ministers from twenty nations, more than royal pomp and ease, were familiar sights in that present city of beggars—in that day, we say, was a noble family, by name La Bourse, whose coat of arms, appropriately enough, was three purses—in whose large hall the merchants of Bruges and Antwerp, and Ghent and Mons, and all the other old towns of the Hanseatic and other leagues, used to meet and do business; and thus, in a short while, Bourse came to signify any place of exchange.

We happened to be a little late, and had to pay a fee for entrance: it is a fine circular building,



THE FRUIT MARKET AT ROTTERDAM, WITH THE STATUE OF ERASMUS.

with a cloister running round it, supported by richly florid gothic columns. In 1550, Sir Thomas Gresham, then residing at Antwerp as the British agent, took the idea of the old Royal Exchange in Cornhill from this; and in 1853 the merchants of Antwerp covered over the circular walls with a roof of glass, borrowed from our Great Exhibition building in Hyde Park. Here, at Antwerp, the merchant prince Gresham was instructed to buy a good "palfrey" for her majesty Elizabeth—coaches not having as yet come into London; and after great trouble we find sir Thomas writing to Cecil, and saying: "The queen's Turkey-horse doth begin to amend in his feet and body, and which, doubtless, is one of the readiest horses that is in all Christendom, and will certainly run the best." On this very Antwerp horse good queen Bess rode through the city of London, "on a pillion, behind her lord chancellor, Burleigh, which pillion was a softly-cushioned low-backed chair, with a hanging shelf to support the feet."

We left the buzz—the usual business buzz—behind, and then went to see what I was longing to see, yet dreaded to see, lest I should be disappointed, and had therefore postponed it to the last; for to-morrow morning, right early, we must be on the Quai Vandyck, to start with the "Amicitia" for Rotterdam. We are longing to enter Holland—"busy Holland, with her most

thronged harbours, humming cities, and populous plains;" but it would be improper to leave Belgium without seeing Rubens' finest picture, "The Descent from the Cross;" and after this, kind reader, we shall not say any more about pictures. Let me copy, *verbatim*, what I wrote that night in the quiet of my room in the Rubens Hotel. No feeling that I can resuscitate now can ever be compared to the intense vividness of the impressions I carried home that night; when I slept it was a feverish, wakeful sleep; all night long I started, as first my window, then my bed-curtains, then the walls of the room, kept wreathing themselves in the pyramidal form of this wondrous composition; and since my return home, many and many a wild dream have I had over and over again, in which a cross suddenly started up surrounded with figures, while from it descended one, dead, dead, unutterably dead! and I have rejoiced to wake and find that it was all a dream. *Nous revenons!* We wrote thus: "A franc and a half admitted us to the 'Atelier,' where the picture is undergoing a cleaning, etc., under the judicious care of an artist from Brussels, selected by the king of Belgium, his majesty being, as is well known, a most munificent patron of the fine arts. I sat before this picture a full hour in silence and in wonder, and wept. 'Christ is dead,' as Mrs. Stowe truly says, is the impression left on the mind; yet

I felt 'dead' beyond all hope—beyond all recovery. Joseph of Arimathea says so, looking at that dead body with his supremely Jewish face, half hoping, yet half doubting still; Nicodemus says so, not so despairing, but quite as desponding as his brother secret disciple; Mary, with all the deep grief of a mother, whose heart the sword at last has pierced, who says nothing, but raises her hands to touch once more the form she had nourished, whose blue mantle throws up the light wondrously on her pale and sorrow-stricken face says, 'Yes, *he* is dead; John, on the other side of the cross, wondering and trembling, with a face full of spiritual expression, says, 'We thought this had been He who should have redeemed Israel; below are the two sisters of Bethany, quietly and womanly submitting to an overwhelming sorrow; they seem to say, 'All is over; our Jewish hopes have perished, and now our Christ hopes have perished too! Christ is dead!' and never was death more marvellously made real than in this pale, drooping, blood-stained, descending form. There are other pictures of Rubens in the same atelier; but they were badly disposed; and had they been better arranged I should have had no heart to look at them. And now, having for once satisfied my eye with seeing, may memory once again bring back the grand impressions of this wonderful and all-subduing picture." So we wrote that night, and something else too, which we quote not, about other matters of minor importance.

Next morning we rose early: when were we late? We hastened to be in time for the boat, with the unpleasant feeling that one of our fellow travellers was not up, but was asleep in bed, "turning his sides, and his shoulders, and his heavy head," whereby he lost his boat, and had to join us at Amsterdam some days afterwards. At six o'clock we had left Antwerp and were en route to Rotterdam.

We have already told our readers how we travelled; and here we are in the fore cabin of the "Amicitia," a boat every traveller on this route knows; and while breakfast is getting ready, let us look round at our fellow travellers. At the remote end are two Flemish countrywomen mending the colours of some smack—perchance their husbands' or their brothers'; by them are two Dutchmen, apparently hucksters, quietly and so-lidly smoking their morning pipe; next to them is the "we" of these experiences, opposite a friend who has just pacified a crying child by giving her a lump of sugar, a kind of language all children seem to comprehend; there is a young mother beside that child, with another who has come from Calais to join her husband in the Dutch police at Rotterdam; next to her is a fresh coloured Friesland young woman, knitting a black stocking most vigorously; then a lady-like looking woman also knitting, with her daughter of eight or nine years old, with whom we cannot talk, for the curse of Babel is between us, but with whom we have a good game of "cats' cradle," understood here in the Scheldt as in England; and last of all are two tidy young women who have been to Antwerp to make purchases, and are now returning home; one of them has a red tin pail by her side, containing a loaf of black bread, a pair of stays, some

shoes, a cheese, etc.; and amidst all is a little hearty steward, bobbing here and there, patronising everybody, and myself especially, as I went on writing, by saying once and again, "Dat isht goot, mynheer."

Amidst smoke and noise I wrote, pacifying another child with a dirty face, by an egg and a piece of bread, to which the mother says, "Dankee, dankee, mynheer," when suddenly the vessel stops, and in rushes a man with a half-and-half kind of helmet and a green frock coat, somewhat like a London fireman, crying out, "Oetroi, oetroi, monsieur, votre bagage, monsieur." We have left Belgium, and are in Holland; the overhauling proceeds quickly and politely; the hatchways of the vessel are battened down and the arms of the king of Holland fixed on them; passengers have their luggage marked, and again we are on our way down, or rather up, this winding Scheldt. Oftentimes it is called "lazy," but this is an opprobrious epithet; it moves slowly, to be sure, but it is not lazy for all that; it has travelled fast enough in the mountain uplands where it rose; it has rushed swiftly through many a ravine and over many a rocky height; here it has no outfall, and is slowly progressing, as a grave river should, into the great commingling ocean beyond. So let us do; so may the fire and zest of youth, the quick blood and beating aspirations of the morning of life, sober down into the calmness and gravity of a well-disciplined old age, that seriously contemplates the ocean of eternity not far distant, whose rolling surges may now and then be heard upon the hollow sounding shore.

Well; up the Scheldt; let us go on deck. You have been told that the scenery on its banks is tame and insipid; go and judge for yourself. True, the country is flat, very flat, but very picturesque nevertheless; and unless you study it, you will never understand Dutch pictures. Level land, richly cultivated, dotted with cows, (the black and white spotted prevail,) sheep, (the damp country does not agree with them and they look sheepish,) goats, clumps of trees, quaint, old, and now and then very dashing, jaunty windmills, make up the shore scenery, with no end of storks asleep in their own lazy fashion on one leg, with their heads bent down almost parallel with their necks. And now look on the river itself—call this dull, then what is lively? Here they come, steamer after steamer; sometimes half a dozen are in sight at a time, on pleasure trips; rafts that have come hundreds of miles down the Meuse till its waters join the Scheldt; heavy barges and gaily painted galliots, so thoroughly Dutch; long narrow boats with a solitary woman rowing stoutly her marketables home; and as we near Rotterdam, once again windmills, windmills everywhere, fizzing, spinning, flying round and round for ever; you can't count them, it is impossible, and here we are, while looking at these things opposite the New Bath hotel, at Rotterdam, and stepping ashore on the Boompjes.

Ashore in Holland! "Whatever made you choose Holland," said a friend, "of all places the most unpicturesque?" We had reasons, and hope the readers of the "Leisure Hour" will find them out as we proceed.

We discarded all foreign aid, pushed aside no

end of touters, received cards of hotels and lodging houses galore, and determined to go on, until we came to a decent looking "gasthof" (guesthouse), the swarm of waiters, etc., having gradually diminished, when we found ourselves opposite the Israelitisch Gasthof, into which we went, walked up-stairs, and found, to our great relief, that our host spoke excellent English. We soon made our arrangements, and had no reason to regret that we had fallen upon Jewish hospitality and integrity. After tea, at which we had for the first time, what afterwards we found so general, raw salted herring, we had a quiet walk, and returning home, found our Jewish family engaged in prayer—it was Saturday evening; while we in our quiet room had our worship, and retired, thankful for the many mercies of a pleasant voyage.

The next morning I lay in bed quietly reading "Monod's Temptation of Jesus," while my companions rose, for we occupied a three-bedded room; and after breakfast we started for the English congregational church, of which the Rev. Mr. — is the respected and useful pastor. Our host procured a little *commissionnaire* who could speak a little English, without whose help it would have been an impossibility to find our way through a city, each street of which is the facsimile of the one you have just left. The service begins at ten o'clock; and as we entered it was pleasant to hear St. Ann's sung to an old and favourite hymn. We heard a good and most practical sermon from "Labour not for the meat that perisheth."

On our return home, we passed through the Groot Markt, in the centre of which is the bronze statue of Erasmus. It is a very poor affair, and quite unworthy of Rotterdam. As is well known, Desiderius Erasmus was the Latin name that Gerrit Gerritz gave himself, and by which he desired to be known to posterity; and on each side of the pedestal is a long inscription setting forth the praises of this very slippery reformer. Close by is a small house, and in a niche between two of the windows is a plate with this inscription: "Hæc est parva domus, magnus quæ natus Erasmus." But, alas! "to what base uses may we come, Horatio!" Erasmus' birthplace is turned into a house for the sale of schiedam, gin bitters, and Bavarian beer.

We attended the cathedral in the afternoon; all other protestant places have but the morning service, and none in the week; the organ is one of the largest in Europe, and was played beautifully; it has 6500 pipes, and 92 stops! However, there are now some English ones larger than this. I cannot do better than add the few words of Chambers on this cathedral and its service: "The forms of public worship differ very little from those followed by the Scottish presbyterians. The only remarkable peculiarity which I observed in the service, was the reading of a chapter and the singing of a hymn by the precentor, previous to the entrance of the clergyman; also the use of an organ in assisting the psalmody. The custom of the women sitting apart on chairs in the centre of the church was new to me, and I suppose is of ancient origin. Nothing can be more decorous than the devout demeanour of the whole congrega-

tion,* all of whom engaged for a few minutes in mental prayer on entering the church, and many also when the psalms are about to be sung. I shall never forget the impression made on my mind, on hearing the congregation swelling the note of praise, and giving utterance with their whole heart to sentiments of devotion. The voices of the people, combined with the loud and thrilling peals of one of the largest organs in the world, formed a burst of sound like the roar of thunder, and seemed as if about to rend the ancient gothic structure to its foundation."

A pleasant walk by Zwaansfeldt brought me to Mr. —'s house, where a pleasant cup of tea and genial intercourse made the Sabbath evening very home-like. From him I learnt that Rotterdam contains three churches, where the service is wholly in English; an Episcopal, a Scotch church, and the Presbyterian, called also the Dutch Reformed, each of them averaging a congregation of about 200, with a Sunday-school of 40 or 50. Besides which—and this shows how different in ecclesiastical arrangements protestant Holland is to protestant England—there are thirteen ministers appointed to preach in the various calvinistic churches of the city, who preach in rotation, no minister being permitted to settle or be settled over a particular congregation. A list is drawn up every week by the consistory, published on Saturday, called the "Dominie's briefje," and affixed to the doors of each church in Rotterdam, from which the inhabitants learn where their favourite preacher may be heard the next day. Of other churches, there are in this city of nearly 90,000 inhabitants, one French Reformed, three Roman Catholic, two Jansenists, one Jesuit church, one Jews' synagogue, (a very noble building,) one Mennonite or Baptist, one Lutheran, one Remonstrant church with three clergymen, besides several "Dissenting" congregations, as they are here called, that is, offshoots from the different bodies named above. To this may be added that, with the exception of the Episcopal and Mennonite congregations, all are paid by and are under the supervision of the government.

All the ministers of religion in Holland are called "dominie;" and as coffee is an institution in this country, and as every one, high and low, takes coffee at noon, the dominie is careful not to detain his congregation beyond that hour: a few minutes after twelve, and coffee would cease to be coffee; it would be an *innovation*; and, as is well known, our Dutch friends have a great dislike to innovations. On our way home by the canal side, (so like Demerara, that it seemed to me the same place,) we called on Mr. —, father-in-law of a Scotch dominie in the Wester-straight. Very pleasant was it here in a strange land to meet with a good Christian merchant, quietly reading his "Christian Treasury," and to have an hour's pleasant Sabbath-like intercourse with a good man, serving his generation here according to the will of God: and then his little grandchildren, they climbed upon one's knees, and begged for a

* When we were there, there were at least 2000 persons present; we sat by a servant girl, who, from a deep pocket, drew out her psalm and tune book, which she handed to us; and we could not see one person, high or low, without his note book.

missionary story about the negroes that had received the gospel, and how they were going on; and so passed the evening pleasantly, and not soon to be forgotten. It was like one's own dear home. Yes, Christianity is the true free-masonry—the only real bond of brotherhood.

On reaching my Israelitish Gasthof, our kind host met me on the stairs, saying he wished to introduce me to their chief rabbi, who happened to be in the coffee-room. We conversed pleasantly, through "mine host," until weary I suppose of this interlocation, he asked me, "Can you talk Sanscrit?" "Nay, mynheer." "Can you talk Chaldee?" "Nay, mynheer." "Can you talk Arabic?" "Nay, mynheer." "Can you talk Hebrew?" "Nay, mynheer." We gave it up. Imagine one living man talking the languages of the Brahmin, the Assyrian, the Arabian, and the Jew of old! We had been registered by the police as "ecclesiastique," and were in consequence supposed to know all tongues.

THE SERPENT HOUSE OF THE ZOO-LOGICAL GARDENS.

NO. IV.

As by accident our special observations were first directed to poisonous serpents, it may be as well to continue their survey. In the cage now before us, on a floor of sand and pebbles, in zigzag flexures, with the broad head spread flat, as it would appear, lies a snake, most beautiful and yet most hideous; beautiful in its colours, which form a pattern very difficult to describe, in which rose-pink, grey, and brown of different shades are most artistically contrasted; hideous in its ferocity of aspect, the remarkable thickness of the body, and its imperturbable repose; yet it watches every movement we make, and is ready for the assault. This reptile is a species of cerastes, or horned snake, from Western Africa.

In the snakes of the present group, a little pointed horn rises up above each eye, giving a singular and unpleasant aspect to the physiognomy; the muzzle is short and blunt, and the back of the head very broad; the whole reminds us of the head of a bull-dog, supposing it were unnaturally flattened. All are natives of Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and Africa. The snake before us, if not identical with a species from the interior of Southern Africa described by Dr. A. Smith, is closely related to it (*Cerastes caudalis*). The habits of the cerastes differ greatly from those of the cobra. They are sluggish, indolent, and heedless of the approach of man, permitting themselves to be almost touched without evincing any fear or concern. On the contrary, the cobra or naja is always ready for fight; it is a high caste snake, and has much of the Arab of the desert in its temperament. If its haunt be invaded, it sallies forth and advances against the intruder, with uplifted crest, in proud defiance. But the cerastes lies quiet, and waits to be molested, when it turns with a startling impulse and strikes the fatal blow. On this account Dr. Smith assures us that the cerastes is more dreaded by the natives of South Africa than snakes possessed of more viru-

lent poison, as the cobra, but disposed to action on the approach of danger; for, lurking in the dry sand, it often inflicts a wound before its presence has been perceived. "The cerastes," he observes, "will continue for days together in one position; and as it never seeks to avoid danger, however imminent, its presence is rarely discovered unless when trampled upon, and the offending party is wounded by its fangs. Though inactive, it is by no means so when injured; its movements are then performed with activity, and when it once seizes the obnoxious object, it retains its hold with great determination, and some considerable exertion is often required to detach it. The same may be said of most of the vipers, in which respect they differ materially from the naja."

In Jackson's "Morocco," a species of cerastes termed *El Effah* (probably identical with the Hebrew word *Ephah*, translated viper), is described and figured. He observes that this is one of the most common and venomous serpents of North Africa and South-western Asia. It is described as being about two feet long, and as thick as a man's arm, beautifully spotted with yellow and brown, and sprinkled over with blackish specks. They abound in the desert of Suse, where their holes are extremely numerous. Captain Riley, in his authentic narrative, describes the colours of this snake as very beautiful, and says that Jackson's engraving is correct. This species, which differs from the Egyptian cerastes, is perhaps the same as the West African cobra in the cage before us.

Long as we have stood scrutinising this West African horned snake, and notwithstanding our attempts to excite it—attempts which would have aroused the cobra to fury, and awakened the whirr of the rattlesnake—it has not moved, though its linear pupil has several times dilated, as if the fire of vengeance were smouldering within. Let us take a last look at its beautiful colouring, and turn to its plainer neighbour and relative from the deserts of Egypt.

From the earliest times has the horned snake or cerastes of Egypt been celebrated; and it is still an unchanged inhabitant of a region which has undergone more revolutions than we can readily enumerate. Figures of it occur abundantly in the temples of antiquity, and it now shrouds itself in their ruins, and crawls over the broken and prostrate images of deities and Pharaohs. Its lurking habits and sudden attacks are alluded to in the Scriptures: "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels." Gen. xlix. 17. The cerastes of Egypt is a tenant of the hot and parched desert, where, in ruts or depressions, or amidst loose stones, it will lie quietly for days, basking in the rays of the sun; and as its colours assimilate with those of the surface upon which it reposes, there is danger of treading accidentally upon it, at the risk of a wound. In these deserts it feeds upon large insects, and sand-haunting lizards, such as the skink and others. Probably it never drinks. So great is the partiality of these snakes for warmth, that, during the night, when the temperature of the atmosphere is greatly diminished, they will approach the fires of an encampment or bivouacking party; and Bruce observes,

that "when we made a fire at night, by digging a hole and burning wood to charcoal in it, for the sake of dressing our victuals, it was seldom that we had fewer than a dozen of these vipers, which burned themselves to death by approaching the embers."

Bruce, who evidently regarded the cerastes with aversion, though he tested the effects of its poison on pigeons, further remarks: "The cerastes moves with great rapidity, and in all directions, forwards, backwards, and sideways; when it inclines to surprise any one who is too far from it, it creeps with its side towards the person, and its head averted, till, judging its distance, it turns round, springs upon him, and fastens upon the part next to it; for it is not true that the cerastes does not leap or spring. I saw one of them at Cairo crawl up the side of a box in which there were many others, and there lie still as if hiding himself, till one of the people who brought them to us came near him; and, though in a very disadvantageous posture, sticking as it were perpendicularly to the side of the box, it leaped near the distance of three feet, and fastened between the man's finger and thumb, so as to bring the blood. The fellow showed no signs either of fear or pain, and we kept him with us for full four hours, without his applying any sort of remedy, or seeming inclined to do so. To make myself assured that the reptile was in its perfect state, I made the man hold it by the neck, so as to force open the mouth, and lacerate the thigh of a pelican, a bird as large as a swan. The bird died in about thirteen minutes, though it was apparently affected in about fifty seconds."

Bruce adduces many other instances of a similar nature, and attributes the impunity of these snake-catchers to the influence of certain herbs, taken internally, and also applied externally, so as to saturate the system with an antidote. But he thinks that some persons, as the native negroes of Senaar, are naturally proof against the poison of serpents. Now, with regard to the backwards and sidelong mode of progression displayed by the cerastes, Bruce is to some degree in error. When the reptile lies stretched out it can certainly, as we have often seen, retract its head and body, and also throw them to one side; but that it can travel backwards or sideways is another point; and as for the impunity of men from the bite of venomous serpents, either by means of drugs habitually taken, or in consequence of some innate peculiarity of the system, all that we can say is, that we do not believe it. We are, in fact, assured that, so far from the serpent-charmers being proof against the poison, many fatal cases have occurred, in which men suffered themselves to be bitten, knowing that the fangs had been extirpated, and forgetting that a sufficient time for their reproduction had elapsed. Bruce was credulous; and we cannot help thinking, with M. Cloquet, that he was imposed upon by the dexterity of jugglers, who substituted a fangless for a perfect snake, and *vice versa*, as the need might be. His details are anything but precise. He was timid, moreover; for when speaking about the poison glands, he says: "I confess the danger attending the dissection of these parts made me so cautious, that any observations I should make

upon them would be the less to be depended upon." From this we may judge of his coolness and strictness of observation, when the living reptiles were creeping about him, or writhing in the hands of cunning jugglers conversant with all their habits.

Let us pass to an adjacent cage, and there pause for a minute to contemplate the inert, sluggish, bloated snakes, termed puff-adders (*Echidna*). These reptiles are natives of Africa, and in form, habits, and disposition, closely resemble the cerastes. It is only when roused that they exert themselves, and they are always unwilling to commence battle. Their name of puff-adder has arisen from the habit they possess of distending themselves with air, which they force into the voluminous lungs, and thereby inflate the whole body to a surprising extent. They are very fond of warmth, and often creep towards the night fires of herdsmen or travellers wandering over the karroo. A gentleman, who has travelled extensively in Southern Africa, told the writer that one morning, on awaking from his sleep, (which was on the ground, with his wagons around him,) he felt an unusual weight upon his chest, and, on throwing open his cloak, to his dismay beheld a large puff-adder quietly coiled up and reposing upon him, satisfied, no doubt, with the warmth of its novel bed. His first intention was to seize the reptile suddenly, and throw it from him; but, on consideration, he thought the plan too hazardous, and therefore lay perfectly still. In a short time the reptile, aroused by the light, leisurely uncoiled itself, and as leisurely took its departure, to his great satisfaction. He forbade its being killed, from a sense of justice.

We must not pass from the poisonous snakes, here exhibited to our contemplation, without turning to the cage containing specimens of our European adder or viper. This is the only poisonous British reptile; but, as it is subject to a great variation in colouring, several supposititious species have been described by the older naturalists. A red variety is not uncommon. We have taken it in Cheshire.

The word viper, or *vipera*, is evidently an abbreviation of the term *vivipara*, in allusion to its production of living young instead of eggs. The word adder is probably a corruption of the ancient British *neidre*, in the plural *nadroedd*, a term applicable both to this reptile and the common snake. We may here observe, that many snakes not venomous are viviparous; most, if not all, venomous and sea-snakes are so.

The adder, or viper, is not uncommon on dry sandy heaths and scrubs, on chalk hills, in sunny copses, and similar localities; it is fond of basking in the sun, and retires on the approach of an intruder with far more deliberation than does the common snake when surprised under similar circumstances. It is, in fact, more sluggish in all its actions. We have often closely watched a viper thus luxuriating, and which, though evidently aware of our presence, showed no disposition to take its departure. To the female in particular the warmth of the sun is important, for though the reptile produces living young, yet these young are extruded from eggs, which are hatched within the body of the parent; and for this

end heat is as essential as it is for maturing the eggs of the common snake, which are so frequently deposited in manure beds. The number of young which the viper brings forth, varies from six to fifteen, and they measure from six to eight inches in length. These, unlike the young of the common snake, are under the immediate protection of the parent; and it has been asserted by many, that when threatened by danger she opens her mouth and admits them into her throat, as the opossum does her brood into her pouch, upon the like emergency. Though there is no physiological impossibility in this affair, yet we doubt its correctness, and suspect that the belief has arisen from the fact of living young having made their appearance when a female viper has been killed or cut asunder. At the same time, we do not positively deny it. Mr. Blyth (London's Magazine, Nat. Hist.) says: "I have been informed of this (reception of the young) by so many credible eye-witnesses, that I cannot hesitate in yielding implicit credence to the fact. One man in particular, on whose word I fully rely, tells me that he has himself seen as many as thirteen young vipers thus enter the mouth of their parent, which he afterwards killed and opened for the purpose of counting them."

The following extract shows that the habit referred to is common to other venomous serpents, all of which are, I believe, ovo-viviparous, (producing eggs hatched within the body of the female). It is stated of the rattlesnake, in Hunter's "Memoir of a Captivity among the North American Indians," that when alarmed, the young ones, which are eight or ten in number, retreat into the mouth of the parent, and re-appear on its giving a contractile muscular token that the danger is passed." M. De Beauvois (Amer. Phil. Trans. iv) asserts the same thing, stating that having accidentally disturbed a large rattlesnake, he saw it instantly coil itself up and open wide its jaws, down which five young ones, which were lying beside it, instantly retreated. He then withdrew, still watching the snake, and in about a quarter of an hour saw them emerge. He approached a second time, when the young retreated into their parent's mouth with greater celerity than before, and the snake immediately moved off among the grass, and made her escape. The celebrated Gilbert White, in alluding to this habit, says: "Several intelligent folks assure me that they have seen the viper open her mouth and admit her helpless young ones down her throat on sudden surprises; and yet the London viper-catchers insist on it to Mr. Barrington, that no such thing ever happens." Mr. Blyth, however, had his information from persons well acquainted with the habits of the viper, living in Surrey, within ten or twelve miles of London.

Though dogs and smaller animals die from the effects of the bite of a viper, its poison is not generally fatal to man, although it produces great pain, inflammation, and even suppuration of the glands above the wound. We have known such instances, and also cases in which dogs have ultimately recovered, after much suffering. At the same time, we confess that the bite of an old viper, in hot weather, when all its energies are in full perfection, is very likely to prove fatal to

children, and to persons of a debilitated frame or nervous temperament. Such cases are on record.

Poisonous as is the viper, and consequently feared as it has ever been, yet it has been highly esteemed, both in ancient and modern times, in a medicinal point of view—its flesh being regarded as peculiarly restorative and nutritious. The ancients used it dressed like fish or eels, in cases of leprosy, elephantiasis, and other dreadful cutaneous diseases. In England, within the last fifty years, vipers' flesh was prescribed, and the apothecaries kept them as they now do leeches. Dr. Mead recommends them to be boiled like fish, and considers the dish as "really delicious fare;" he also recommends wine in which "vipers have been digested two or three days in a gentle heat," from which he says he has seen very good effects in obstinate cases of leprosy. In France and Italy, the broth, jelly, and flesh of vipers, is still in esteem as a restorative medicine. No doubt it is nutritious; and we must not forget that in many countries the flesh of snakes is acceptable. Lopez informs us that in Congo the negroes eat broiled serpents, and account them most delicious food.

Like the poison of all serpents, that of the adder is inert when swallowed internally, provided there be no abrasion of the lips, tongue, or gums. It was on the knowledge of this fact that the ancient *Psylli* of Africa founded their practice of curing the bite of snakes, by sucking the venom from the wound. Cato, according to Lucan, employed these men on his march through the Lybian deserts, for the recovery of his wounded soldiers. Celsus comments on this point. But it is time to turn to other tribes of the serpent race.

ON READING FOR INSTRUCTION.

WE are called upon continually to provide reading for a variety of classes. The "Leisure Hour" is now familiarly known in all quarters of the kingdom, and from time to time we receive communications expressive of the welcome it meets with among readers and thinkers in different positions in society; now from persons of education and influence, and now from men in the humble walks of life, who have had few or none of the advantages of education, and whose influence—and there is not a human creature living without influence of some kind—is exercised upon their families and personal associates. Our object is to be welcome, agreeable, and beneficial to all who may favour us with a perusal. To accomplish this object we must amuse and interest as well as admonish and instruct. There is a great difficulty here. If we were addressing but one class, or many classes standing on one intellectual level, our task would be comparatively easy. But while we have readers of almost every grade of intelligence, we are under the necessity of meeting, so far as the range of our subjects will admit of our doing it, the demands of all. While we are admitted into the rich man's drawing-room, our rate of subscription shuts us out from no poor man's cottage, no labourer's home. We have as many friends (perhaps more) among the hard-handed sons of toil as we have among the easy and comfortable classes; and our pictured sheet lies as often on the workman's

bench or the cottage window-sill as on the parlour table. If to some we appear at times deficient in depth, and unnecessarily simple in speech, it may happen that to others we appear as abstruse and hard to be understood. Our educated friends will forgive us if, for the space of a column or so, we endeavour to meet this latter objection; taking our word for it that the few sentences of advice we are about to tender are not uncalled for. The cheap press, during the last few years, has brought into existence a new and numerous increasing class of readers—not so much persons who *could* not, as persons who *did* not, read before. It is to them chiefly that the following few sentences are addressed. To begin—

The object of all reading should be instruction. If you do not grow wiser, in some way, by what you read—that is, if you are *only* amused and not instructed by what you read—you are throwing away the greater part of the time spent in reading. To gather instruction from the pages of a book, you must understand them, and you cannot understand without consideration and thought. While it is desirable that you should select such books and publications as you can master, it is indispensable that you should exercise the powers of your own mind, and be determined to master them. Do not complain of the words of many syllables that a writer uses, so long as he speaks to you in fair and honest English. It is better for you—better a thousand times—that you should come upon a word or a phrase now and then, the meaning of which you should have to seek out by inquiry or by the help of the dictionary, than that you should be written to in such words and forms of expression only as you are already acquainted with. If authors were to write down to the comprehension of the lowest intellects, they would never succeed in raising them to a respectable standard; and instead of promoting the popular improvement, they would retard it. It is an old saying, that if you wish to make a person a dunce, you have only to treat him as a dunce, and he is sure to become one. There is much truth in this, and it is not less applicable to a class than to an individual. If the labouring and uninstructed classes be written down to, be sure of one thing—they will be kept down.

When a man or a lad in humble life acquires a taste for reading, he makes a grand discovery; he enters upon a new world—a world as new to him as America was to Columbus when he first set foot upon it—a world full of marvels and mysteries, and, what is better than these, full of a wealth of wisdom of which he may help himself to as much as he can carry away, and make it honestly his own. The great drawback is, that he finds he cannot carry much of it. The land of literature is to him a strange land, and its language, to a considerable extent, a strange language. In this dilemma he is apt to make the mistake of supposing that if the writer had used simpler language he should have understood the subject at once, and enriched himself by a new possession. In the present day this idea is generally without foundation. There was a time when knowledge, which was not thought good for the common people, was boxed round with a kind of learned pedantry, which rendered it accessible only to few; but that time has gone by, and the best writers now address themselves to

the largest classes—for a very sufficient reason, namely, that in these days, when books are sold so cheap, it is only from the patronage of the multitude that they can hope for adequate remuneration. It is the interest of all popular writers to simplify their propositions, whatever they may treat of, as far as possible; but this practice of simplifying can only be carried out to a limited extent, after all, for a reason which, on a moment's consideration, will be obvious. What are words? Words are nothing more or less than the names of ideas; if any combination of letters of the alphabet suggest no idea to the mind, such combination is mere gibberish, not a word. All the words that an illiterate man is acquainted with have their corresponding ideas in his mind; and all the ideas in his mind have their corresponding words in his memory. Now if he turn the faculties of his mind to a new subject—a subject entirely different from anything which has before occupied his attention—it is as certain that he will meet with new words as that he will meet with new ideas; and, simplify as much as we may, it is not easy to perceive how he is to make himself master of any new subject through his old stock of words. Thus, in order to get new ideas, you *must* get new words; and in the proportion that you master their meaning will be your knowledge of the subject to which you turn your attention.

To profit by literature, then, you must learn its language. All that has been done, or can or will be done in the simplifying processes, will never do away with that necessity. But how? That is the question—which is the readiest and most practicable way of setting about it? Let us see if we cannot cite a case in point.

It happened to the Rev. John Newton, the friend of the poet Cowper, that once in his life he was shut up on ship-board, with no other means of occupation at his command than those afforded by a few books in English, and a copy of Livy, the Roman historian, in Latin. He had soon exhausted the English books, and then he began to look with a longing eye upon the thick Latin volumes, which were sealed to him, from his ignorance of the language. He knew something, however, of the grammar of the tongue, and he had got a dictionary. He made up his mind, and set to work at once. You may imagine him, if you like, clearing his way, a line or two an hour, for the first few days; thumbing the dictionary at every turn, and writing down the words, with their meanings, which he was fearful of forgetting. But look at him after he has been at it a fortnight. He now reads half a page at a time before he turns to his dictionary, and does half a dozen pages before breakfast. Look at him again in two months more. He has now begun reading the work a second time; he is enjoying the narrative, and the dictionary is hardly referred to twice in the whole day. His progress must have been something like this; for he tells us that he completely mastered the work in the course of a few months, and that he never afterwards met in any author a Latin word which gave him any trouble.

"But," says the labouring man, "I am not John Newton, and I am not likely to be shut up with a big book and a dictionary for months together."

True, my friend; but you have a much easier

task to get through. Remember that the language you have to learn is your mother-tongue; that the words whose signification bothers you are on the lips of your fellow-countrymen every day and all day long; that you have a living dictionary in your neighbour, who will help you, and whom you may help in your turn; that you can buy a Johnson's dictionary for a shilling, which you can put in your pocket; and remember, too, that every step you advance will render the next step easier.

Take advice, if it suits your case. Here it is. Select a volume of average reading; you may as well make it a history of England. Begin the perusal of that with a dogged determination to understand the whole before you have done with it. Do your best with every sentence, using your dictionary with discretion. If a passage perplex you too much, don't boggle over it, but go on to the next; it will come all plain enough in the second reading; or if not in the second, then in the third. By this means you will learn the meaning of thousands of words which you did not know before, without looking for them in your dictionary, and save yourself a deal of thumbing. Keep the dictionary as a last resource, but never fail to consult it if you cannot get at the true meaning of a word without. Do this with your history of England. Don't be so silly as to imagine that there is any real difficulty in it, but do it thoroughly, as a working-man knows how to do a thing that has to be done; and you too shall say in your turn, as John Newton said with regard to his Latin, that the signification of words gives you no further trouble.

The language of literature once acquired, the world of literature is before you. It is a boundless field of delightful and exciting inquiry, if you make the right use of it. We will not promise that it shall lift you out of the humble sphere you occupy—though it has done that, and more than that, over and over again—but it shall build you up to a nobler state of being, and make you a credit and an ornament to any position you may be called upon to fill.

PEACE IN DEATH.

I HAVE witnessed the death-beds of many of the righteous. I have watched with thrilling interest their experience in that most solemn and most searching hour; and I have found that all, whether babes or fathers in Christ, have alike hung only on the hope of the cross; yea, and the holiest have ever been the humblest in that last struggle. The language of the beautiful hymn best expressed the one sentiment of their heart, as it throbbed, and fluttered, and ceased to beat:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

Yes—however aforesaid some of them had been tempted to look upon themselves with complacency, or to attach importance to their doings or their observances—in that decisive moment, all vanished from their view, save the finished work of their Saviour. Neither privileges, nor sacraments, nor oblations, nor praise of men, nor ecclesiastical distinctions, nor arm of priest or pastor, shared their reliance; but "CHRIST WAS ALL AND IN ALL." Every other anchor drives, every

other cable snaps, before the force of the tide that sweeps the soul into eternity. One, and only one, hope retains its imperishable moorings—it is the hope set before us in Jesus. This can enable the expiring saint to exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." One, who was nearly related and tenderly endeared to him who addresses you—one, whose brief life, passed chiefly in the calmness and seclusion of a rural rectory, had been singularly blameless, said, when—within a step of eternity—she was congratulated on the bright peace which had long irradiated her sick-bed: "It is not mine; it is all of Christ; I cling to him as earnestly as if I had been a murderer." And her father and mine, whose whole "path had been as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," and whose death was one of surpassing ecstasy, observed, a little before he entered into rest: "My daughter said, when dying, 'I am saved as the thief on the cross was; and so say I—so says your father, my children.' Precious simplicity and singleness of hope! May it be ours in life's last agony!"

Let us, then, "hear the conclusion of the whole matter."

Abound in all good works; be fruitful in everything that adorns the doctrine of God your Saviour; be ensamples to them that believe; do to others as you would that others should do unto you; "freely ye have received, freely give;" confess your Master's name, and be jealous for his honour; "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things;" yet after all, and when you have done all, abandon all as supplying the slightest foundation of confidence; and with the apostle still protest, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ."

Shine as lights in your several spheres in this vast mercantile community. Irradiate with holiness each one his own peculiar scene of action, whether it be the counting-house or the manufactory, the workshop or the warehouse. Furnish to the world a living demonstration that faith establishes the law; that the doctrine of grace is a doctrine according to godliness; that they who repudiate all confidence in works are the most careful to maintain them. Compel those who denounce your principles to admire your practice. "With well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." Work—as though all depended on your working; trust—as knowing that all depends on what Christ has wrought. Was your *first* prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" Let the Spirit, if not the letter, of your *last*, be the same. From the cross you began, at the cross you must close your race. Attain what you may, your sole confidence must still be—that great as are your sins the mercies of Christ are infinitely greater, and crimson as is your guilt his blood washes it white as snow.—*The Rev. Hugh Stowell's Lectures on the Character of Nehemiah.*